

BACTERIAL LEAF STRIPE OF BIRD-OF-PARADISE

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Bird-of-Paradise, *Strelitzia reginae* Banks is native to South Africa. It is a trunkless, clustering, slow-growing plant with stiff, leathery, bluish-gray leaves and may attain a height of 5 feet. It is grown for its strikingly beautiful flowers emerging from green boat-shaped bracts, with numerous brilliant orange pointed petals contrasting with an arrow-shaped tongue of vivid blue (1).

A serious leaf disease of young plants has plagued growers in central and southern Florida. The disease, caused by the bacterium *Pseudomonas* sp., attacks only very young leaves, but these leaves may remain on the plant for several years, leaving the plant unsightly (2).

SYMPTOMS. The lesions are narrow, dark brown to black stripes of varying length found between the lateral veins of the leaves (fig. 1). Several adjacent stripes may produce broad bands of affected leaf tissue. A young leaf which becomes infected before it expands often develops an abnormal shape with a frayed margin and wrinkled leaf blade (2).

CONTROL. Diseased leaves should be rogued promptly to remove the source of the bacterium. Overhead irrigation should be avoided where this disease occurs.



Fig. 1. Leaves of *Strelitzia reginae* Banks showing dark stripes caused by *Pseudomonas* sp.

Literature Cited

1. Graf, A. B. 1974. Exotica Third. Roehrs Co., Rutherford, N. J. 1833 p.
2. Wehlburg, C. 1971. Bacterial leaf stripe of *Strelitzia reginae* caused by *Pseudomonas* sp. Plant Dis. Reprtr. 55:447-448.